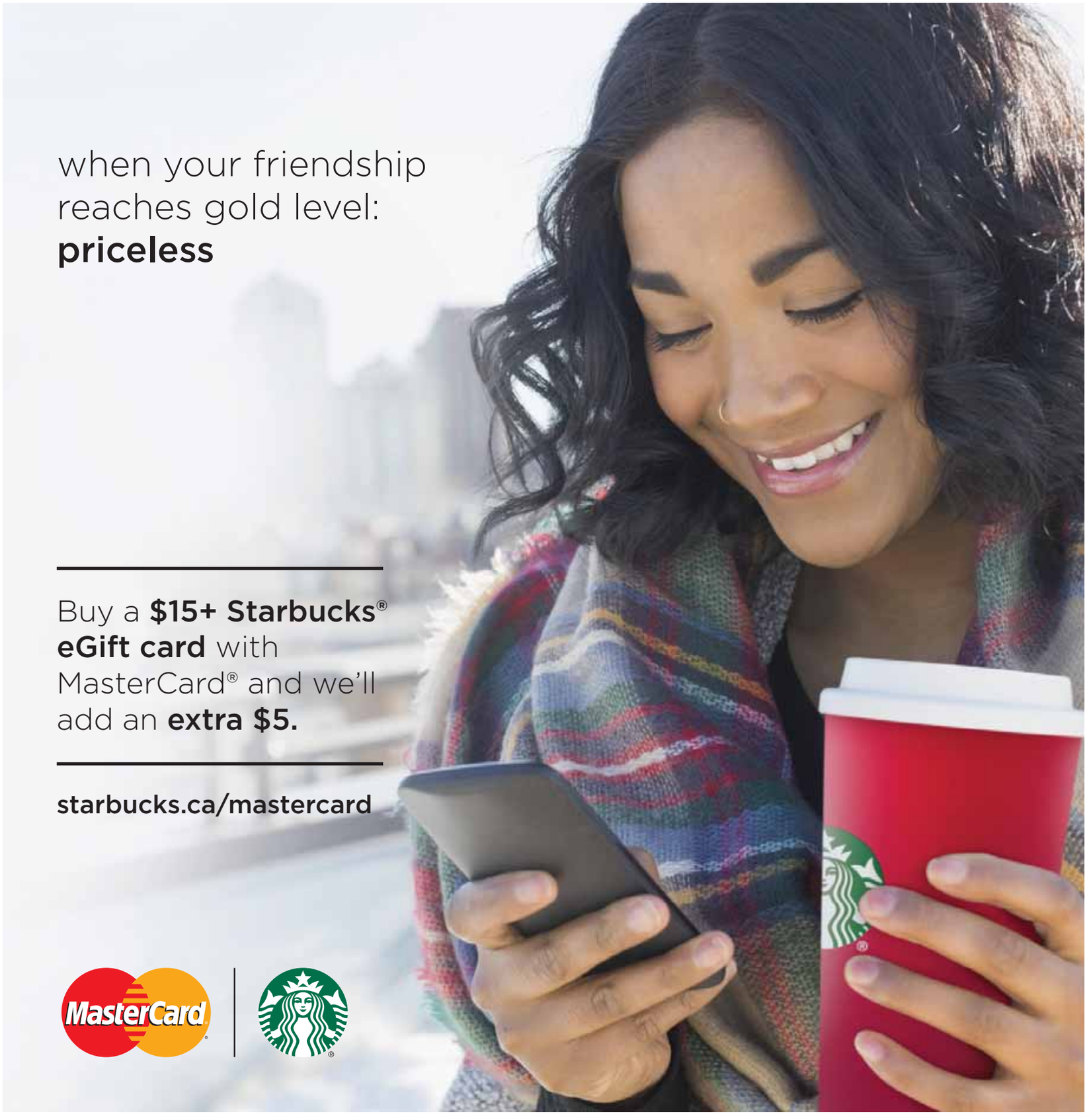
Ottawa metro

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2015



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Ottawa metro

Your essential daily news | TUESDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2015 High 6°C/Low 0°C Rain

EMMA TEITEL ARGUES

No one remembers who came in first

metroVIEWS

HALEY RITCHIE / METRO

A PORTRAIT OF PRIME REAL ESTATE

Some calling for 100 Wellington St., home of former U.S. Embassy, to become national gallery

metroNEWS

Liberals axe union disclosure rules

CANADA REVENUE AGENCY

Bar association, provinces say Tory bill wasn't constitutional

The federal government has taken its first step toward repealing a controversial law that would have required unions to disclose finite details of their spending.

The government says it is waiving requirements for unions to track every dollar of spending so it could one day be publicly disclosed by the Canada Revenue Agency.

The rules were contained in a Conservative private member's bill passed in June over objections from unions, police associations, the federal privacy commissioner, the Canadian Bar Association and seven provinces who called it unconstitutional and argued it would cost millions for the federal government to enforce.

Bill C-377 required unions to disclose all transactions over $5,000, reveal the details of officers or executives who make over $100,000 to the Canada Revenue Agency, which would publicly post the information to its website.

The law comes into force on Dec. 30, and so unions would have had to track spending starting Dec. 31, with the first batch of public disclosures due to the Canada Revenue Agency by mid-2017.

The waiver effectively removes any worry unions had that they would see their spending, including how much they spend on political activities and social causes, as well as details about contracts with private companies and contractors, make public.

> **If the Liberals want to give union bosses a break on transparency, then they should introduce a bill ... and let Parliamentarians vote on it.**
>
> Terrance Oakey, president of Merit Canada, which advocates against mandatory union membership

"No other group in the country has to subject themselves to such a draconian measures as this legislation requires," said Hassan Yussuff, president of the Canadian Labour Congress.

In a news release announcing the waiver, the Liberals said there were already federal labour rules in place requiring unions to open their books to their members to show how they are using dues. Similar rules exist at the provincial level.

Proponents of the bill argue those rules haven't worked well and condemned the government's refusal to enforce the legislation.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation profit last year:

$2 BILLION

Wage increase for workers at the OLG Rideau Carleton Raceway Slots since 2009:

$0

On December 16, the OLG locked out 124 of its workers for refusing to accept a contract that freezes wages for two more years and removes existing pension language from the current collective agreement. The wages that have been frozen since 2009 means that workers at the Rideau Carleton Raceway Slots now earn over **8% less** than workers at some OLG facilities. The OLG now claims that it is ready to come back to the bargaining table, but what it doesn't say is that it's still insisting on the same wage freeze and pension changes, which the union membership rejected by a 96% vote.

This holiday season, let's tell OLG to

#PLAYFAIR

and give its workers a raise!

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metro NEWS

Your essential daily news

Bill Cosby sues model Beverly Johnson over claims comedian drugged her in 1980s.

Farmer's life good to last crop

AGRICULTURE

Christmas-tree dealers decide to retire, sell to local family

Levi Ayer, left, and Paul Ralph bail trees for wholesale at Cedar Hill Christmas Tree Farm in November. Inset: Paul Ralph left, Ria Ralph, Hannah Ayer, Levi Ayer, and Emmy Ayer at their farm, which has been in the family since 1820. PHOTOS BLAIR GABLE/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Paul Ralph describes what it's like harvesting Christmas trees for the last time on an Ottawa Valley farm that has been in the family for nearly 200 years.

"I will be sad … to leave," said Ralph, the noise of heavy machinery humming in the background at his Cedar Hill Christmas Tree Farm in Pakenham. "It's a really beautiful property."

At 70, Ralph is retiring with his wife, Ria, 68, and selling the farm.

Online images of the place in winter show picture-perfect scenes, white snow layering a half-frozen creek against the backdrop of an old farmhouse or falling thick around a sleigh with horses that have just emerged from a covered bridge.

Ralph took over the farm in the mid-'70s with his first wife, Heather, who died in 1994 of breast cancer.

Heather was a Forsythe, a seventh-generation descendant of William Forsythe, who was granted the then 243-hectare farm by the government in 1820, after he arrived from Ireland.

Paul and Heather were both elementary school teachers, and Paul job-shared so he could work half the year on the farm while Heather continued as an educator full-time.

The couple branched out, first planting five hectares of strawberries and then four hectares of raspberries and another four of blueberries as part of a pick-your-own operation. They had another four hectares of sweet corn.

By the late 1980s, they were planting Christmas trees.

After Heather's death, Ralph continued to run the farm. His son Devon joined him two years later, and Ralph married Ria in 1999.

> **We had a very busy enterprise here selling retail fruit, sweet corn and Christmas trees.**
> Paul Ralph

The family decided to sell because there was no one interested in running the operation.

"My children decided they were well-settled living in Arnprior (outside Ottawa). They both have children … and they did not want to take on the responsibility of running a farm" full-time, said Ralph.

For the new owners — dairy farmers Grant and Pam Martin, 41 and 39, and their four boys — it's a sort of homecoming.

"I was raised about two blocks from Cedar Hill Christmas Tree Farm," said Pam, who currently lives on a dairy farm in southwestern Ontario. "Ria was my Brownie and Girl Guide leader growing up. And they were at our wedding. I've known them forever."

Her mother owns and operates Fulton's Pancake House, a Pakenham landmark situated on a 160-plus-hectare sugar bush that offers tours and sleigh rides from mid-February until April.

The Martins met while studying agriculture at the University of Guelph. They got married and took over Sunholm Farms from Grant's late father, Lyle, and his mother, Barbara, in 2003.

Since then, they have milked 80 cows twice a day, 365 days a year.

"There is never a day when there are no chores," said Pam. "We milk cows on Christmas morning, New Year's morning and your birthday and when you're sick." She says her children have learned never to say they're bored.

"It's a great lifestyle and a great way to raise kids and teach them the value of hard work."

Pam says her husband is looking forward to a new challenge after living on a dairy farm for more than four decades — he transitioned it to organic in 1996 — and she hopes the two seasonal businesses, the Christmas tree farm and her mother's sugar bush will be able to help each other.

But for her, the biggest reason to move — next August — is the proximity to her family.

"I will just be going home," says Pam, "two blocks away from my mom, my brother and my sister and the family business that I grew up in."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Gallery idea may be resurrected

100 WELLINGTON ST

Minister, MP promise to find use for venue by 2017

Michael Woods
Metro | Ottawa

The idea of a national portrait gallery in Ottawa has been dormant for more than six years, but it could soon rise from the ashes.

In 2009, the Conservative government scrapped an ambitious plan, launched by Jean Chrétien in 2001 to convert the former U.S. Embassy on Wellington Street into a national portrait gallery.

However, Environment Minister and Ottawa Centre MP Catherine McKenna has promised to find a use for the building at 100 Wellington St., directly across from Parliament Hill, by 2017.

Lilly Koltun, director general of the Portrait Gallery of Canada from 2001 until 2010, said she would be "delighted" to see the plan for a permanent portrait gallery resurrected.

"It has always been a great regret to me that they decided to close it down completely," she said.

"We have an amazing national collection of portraiture that is basically unknown. It truly is a treasure that very few Canadians know about or have a chance ever to see."

Library and Archives Canada boasts a collection of more than 20,000 paintings, drawings and prints, four million photographs and thousands of caricatures.

The collection is known not only for its size, but also its variety.

It showcases both major historical figures as well as everyday Canadians.

"The collection is so broad in scope that basically everybody can see themselves there; themselves and their fathers and grandfathers," Koltun said.

Washington, D.C. and London, U.K. both have national portrait galleries in central locations.

However, Canada's collection doesn't have a permanent home.

Small parts of the collection have toured to cities across Canada, but those exhibitions pale in comparison to what a stable venue could showcase.

"Sending 30, 40 or 50 (portraits) travelling is wonderful, but it is really just a tiny taste of what's there," Koltun said.

More than $11 million of work had already been done to prepare the former U.S. Embassy when the Conservative government changed the project's course.

They first considered putting a portrait gallery in Calgary, partly funded by energy giant EnCana. When that fell through, they launched a nationwide competition inviting nine Canadian cities to bid on hosting the gallery.

That plan was scrapped in November 2008. Koltun said she was never told why.

"I'm not sure I was ever entirely clear on what went into that decision," she said. "I was not actually involved… The government basically decided they were just not going to support it at all."

Dick Forester, left, and Rob Howald haul away a huge wooden figure as Colin Robert takes down the sign for the Portrait Gallery in 2007.
TOM HANSON/THE CANADIAN PRESS

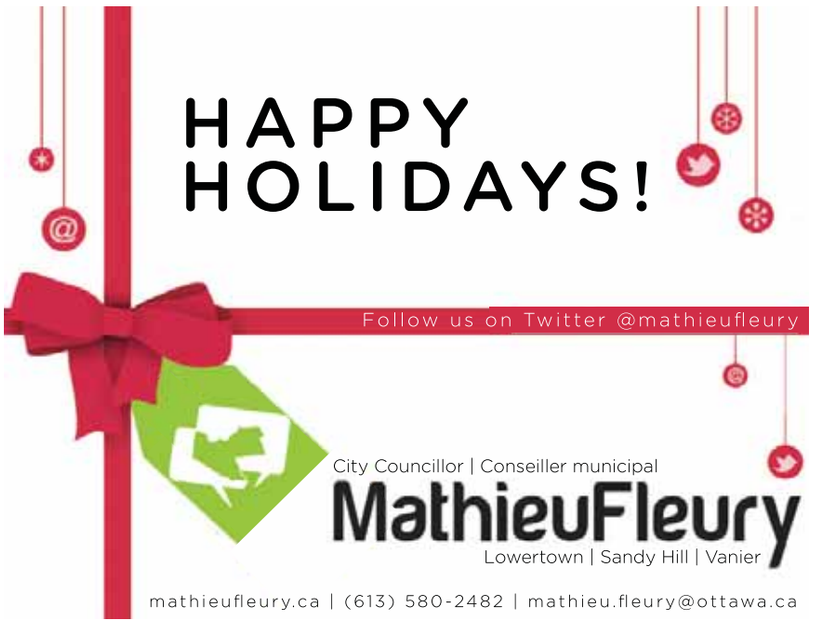
> **It has always been a great regret to me that they decided to close it down completely.**
> Lilly Koltun

McKenna pledged to launch consultations on what to do with the building within 100 days of the election. If that timing holds, that would mean they would start by the end of January.

She didn't specify what she would like to see in the building, but said it should be a significant tourist attraction that creates jobs.

She also suggested hiring summer students to canvas tourists on what the building should house.

Koltun said she would be happy to see a portrait gallery anywhere in Canada, but having it directly across from Parliament Hill makes the most symbolic and practical sense.



LOOKING BACK

Prime real estate: A history of the former U.S. Embassy

Haley Ritchie
Metro | Ottawa

The original American embassy building, located across the street facing Parliament Hill, comes from another time — when the staff of an embassy was only a handful of people.

The original building was constructed in 1932 and designed by American architect Cass Gilbert.

It was built to house 17 people and quickly outgrew the three-story office.

Embassy staff ended up working out of various buildings around the city, posing a security risk.

Planning to construct a new embassy started in 1969 with an eventual move to the current, larger location on Sussex Drive in 1999.

1932

The year the original building was constructed. It was built to house 17 people and was designed by American architect Cass Gilbert.

A variety of ideas were proposed for what to do with the empty building on Wellington, but the idea of a national portrait gallery won out.

Then-Prime Minister Jean Chrétien approved $22-million to be spent on the project in 2001.

Five years later the plan was axed after Stephen Harper became prime minister.

The new Conservative government invited private companies to bid on bringing a portrait gallery to their city, but the idea was eventually abandoned.

Since then Mayor Jim Watson has floated the idea of a "Canada House" featuring various memorabilia showcasing the country's achievements similar to the Smithsonian in Washington, D.C.

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Westgate Shopping Centre

5 THINGS COMMONLY STOLEN FROM CARS ON HOLIDAYS

Nothing is more tempting to a would-be criminal than to see a wallet sitting in the cup-holder of a car just screaming to be stolen. Around the holidays, Ottawa police see an increase in thefts from automobiles, and are now reminding people not to leave valuables, including Christmas gifts, in their cars. Here are the some of the most commonly stolen items from vehicles. BY JOE LOFARO/ METRO

1 GPS

These expensive devices come in handy on the road, but once you leave your car it's best to dismount it to keep it out of sight.

2 Cash

Leaving cash or debit cards behind might be a good way to control spending during the holidays, but make sure it's in the glove compartment or somewhere hidden.

3 Christmas Gifts

The holidays are a time for giving, but for criminals it's a time for taking. Const. Corey MacNeil recommends keeping those presents in your trunk if your first stop isn't home.

4 Briefcases

Sometimes, if you have to keep valuables in your car, police urge you to keep them covered with a blanket or towel to thwart theft.

5 Wallets

For a criminal, this is the jackpot. Even if you remove your cash and debit cards from the wallet before heading into the mall, you're still tempting criminals to attempt breaking into your car.

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OC Transpo commits to Lees

TRANSIT

Extra trips, route changes brought in for modest cost

Emma Jackson
Metro | Ottawa

OC Transpo will pay less than $100 a day to restore some service to Lees station.

That's according to transit planning manager Pat Scrimgeour, who said the extra trips and routes announced for the east-end station are "pretty minor" and won't throw the transit provider off its light rail budget.

"It's all covered by the global budget that council has set" to ease the pain of light rail construction, Scrimgeour said. "It's a matter of asking staff members to come in an hour earlier."

Three hundred people signed a petition last week asking for better early-morning service from Lees to the downtown.

The Transitway shut down Sunday between Lees and Hurdman, rerouting most buses away from Lees and limiting passengers' access to the downtown and the west end for the next two years.

The customer feedback prompted OC Transpo to take a second look at the station's schedule, Scrimgeour said.

On Friday, the transit operator announced it would add three early trips on the 85 — beginning at 4:34 a.m. — to take riders downtown before 7 a.m.

300

Number of names on a petition for better early morning service from Lees to downtown.

Service from seven other routes will also be restored in the evenings and weekends, and the 97 will head south 24 hours a day.

Scrimgeour said it's easier to accommodate changes when they happen outside rush hour, because there's less congestion and more available buses.

The city has earmarked $74 million to mitigate disruptions while the Transitway shuts down to build the high-speed train.

On Jan. 17, LeBreton and Bayview stations will move south to Albert and Scott streets when a western Transitway leg is also closed.

Raw Sugar in Chinatown HALEY RITCHIE/METRO

BUSINESS

Funky Chinatown café closing doors

Haley Ritchie
Metro | Ottawa

The owner of Raw Sugar café in Chinatown announced on Facebook Monday that the funky music venue and artistic watering hole is closing permanently.

"It has been an incredible journey; the Raw Sugar dream," Nadia Kharyati wrote in a Facebook post Monday afternoon.

"I had sincerely hoped the place would carry on; circumstances beyond my control, however, have led me to close my doors today. While the time has come for me to move on, know that this was an incredibly difficult decision to make," she continued.

Kharyati did not specify the reason for closing but thanked patrons and friends for supporting the business for more than seven years.

"Raw Sugar opened with the intention to offer a space where different communities could come together in a welcoming and creative environment, creating a cultural hub," she wrote.

Kharyati certainly succeeded in that goal. The licensed café was a hub of artistic activity inside Chinatown. In the evenings the shop hosted weekly live music performances, poetry readings, trivia nights and board game gatherings.

The cafe was well-known to patrons outside the neighbourhood and Kharyati's post quickly filled up with well wishers mourning the loss of the cafe.

Raw Sugar's closure is the second recent loss of a live music venue in Chinatown.

In November, a massive fire destroyed the Daily Grind, further up on Somerset Street.

ON THE ROADS

Police say driver impaired and driving at 152 km/h

Ottawa police charged a man with impaired driving on Saturday, allegedly at nearly twice the posted speed limit on Woodroffe Avenue.

Police say at about 2:40 a.m., a patrol officer stopped a vehicle that was travelling 152 km/h in an 80 km/h zone.

Shane Fagan, 33, is charged with impaired operation of a motor vehicle and driving over the legal blood-alcohol limit.

Police say his licence was suspended for 90 days and his vehicle was impounded for seven days.

JOE LOFARO/METRO

Cash to help settle refugees

SYRIAN CRISIS

City to greet more than 600 by end of February

Michael Woods
Metro | Ottawa

A trio of Ottawa organizations will receive more than $1.3 million from the province to aid with Syrian-refugee resettlement efforts.

Refugee 613, the Catholic Centre for Immigrants and the University of Ottawa Sponsorship Support Program are all receiving funds for efforts to resettle the hundreds of Syrian refugees expected to arrive in the capital.

The money is part of the $8.5 million over two-and-a-half years the province announced earlier this year.

"We need to make sure that we've got support in place for the long term to assist refugees as they integrate and create conditions of success in our community," Ottawa Centre MPP Yasir Naqvi, the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, said on Monday at the University of Ottawa.

The Catholic Centre for Immigrants is receiving more than $800,000 for case management and housing support.

"These dollars are going to come in very, very handy for us," said Carl Nicholson, the group's executive director. The federal government has provided funding, "but there are gaps," he said. "That is what we're going to be using these dollars for."

Refugee 613, the group coordinating the city's Syrian-refugee response, is receiving $300,000.

"The funding we're receiving today will ensure that we have a sustainable future and can build on what we've begun — and that is huge," said Refugee 613 director Louisa Taylor.

The University of Ottawa's sponsorship program is receiving $225,000. The program trains lawyers and law students to provide pro-bono legal support to help prepare sponsorship applications.

Ottawa is expected to welcome about 130 Syrian refugees by Dec. 31, another 500 or so by the end of February, and several hundred more throughout the rest of 2016.

Naqvi sits on the province's special advisory table on refugees, which is co-ordinating refugee arrival and integration in Ontario.

Ottawa Centre MPP Yasir Naqvi sits on the province's special advisory table on refugees.
ANDREW FRANCIS WALLACE/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

> **We need to make sure that we've got support in place for the long term.**
> Yasir Naqvi

$1.3M

Total amount the province is granting three local organizations for their settlement efforts

CORRECTIONS

Province preps for jail guard strike

The province is preparing for the possibility of a corrections-officers' strike but remains hopeful that a deal can be reached with their union, said the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services on Monday.

"We remain hopeful that the parties can come back together and negotiate," Yasir Naqvi said.

On Friday, the Ontario Public Service Employees Union requested a "no board" report after talks with the government broke down. If the Ministry of Labour grants the request, that would put the sides in a legal strike and lock-out position after a 17-day negotiating window.

Naqvi, an Ottawa MPP, said the province is ready to negotiate and he was "disappointed" that correctional officers voted down a tentative agreement.

"If there is a strike, then we obviously are engaged in contingency planning and we will make sure that communities remain safe," he said.

MICHAEL WOODS/METRO

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Clinic to offer funded IVF

FERTILITY

$50M more a year will help cover costly treatments

Emma Jackson
Metro | Ottawa

The Ottawa Fertility Centre can offer government-funded in-vitro fertilization (IVF) beginning this week.

On Monday, the provincial government revealed a list of 17 clinics approved to offer publicly funded IVF treatment to women who otherwise can't get pregnant.

The Ottawa Fertility Centre is the only clinic approved for eastern Ontario.

Another 32 clinics will offer other fertility treatments under a new funding program that will more than triple Ontario's spending from $20 million to $70 million a year.

Four thousand more women will receive IVF funding under the new program, which until Monday only covered 1,000 patients whose fallopian tubes were completely blocked.

Now the program will be funded through clinic contracts instead of OHIP, which means a broad range of families are eligible: single women or same-sex couples will qualify, as well as women with undefined fertility issues.

Under the new rules, any woman under the age of 43 — with the blessing of her doctor — is eligible to have one IVF cycle covered.

The treatment can cost between $6,500 and $14,000, according to the Ottawa Fertility Centre's fee brochure. Patients must cover drug and embryo storage costs, which can be more than $5,000.

The clinic's website says it has created a wait list for government-funded IVF already.

The province will let clinics decide how to triage patients. Some may choose to treat urgent cases first — patients who are over 40, for instance, or whose medical issues are progressing.

The Ottawa clinic's website says it will treat patients on a first-come, first-serve basis. Families can opt to pay for treatment themselves in the meantime, without losing their spot on the waiting list.

THE CYCLE

The treatment includes retrieving and fertilizing the eggs and implanting all viable embryos, one at a time, until the patient gets pregnant or the embryos are used up.

The Ottawa Fertility Centre is the **sole clinic approved in all of eastern Ontario.** BEN BIRCHALL/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

17

Number of clinics approved to offer provincially-funded IVF treatments so far.

$70M

Annual provincial funding of the new program.

42

Upper age limit of women eligible for coverage.

$14,000

Treatments can cost up to $14,000.

CELEBRATION

2017 excitement in Ottawa

Never mind 2016; get ready for 2017 overload as Ottawa's planning committee for Canada's 150th anniversary announces new "blockbuster" events every two weeks this winter.

Ottawa 2017 director Guy Laflamme said his committee has only announced 20 per cent of the events planned for the big year, when the capital becomes the "epicentre of national celebrations."

The year-long celebrations range from national sporting events (the Roar of the Rings Olympic curling qualifier, the Canadian Track and Field Championships and the Ottawa Champions All-Star Baseball showcase, to name a few) to cultural events like the Juno Awards and Canadian Videogame Awards.

And don't forget the main event on July 1, when Parliament Hill will be home to an epic Canada Day party.

Complete details of the year's "bold, immersive and transformative" events should be announced by next 2016.

EMMA JACKSON/METRO

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Spanking law to be revoked

SECTION 43

End in sight for 'reasonable' force against children

The Liberal government plans to repeal a section of the Criminal Code that protects parents — and teachers — who use spanking and other "reasonable" force against children.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has promised to implement all 94 recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) that investigated the dark history and ongoing legacy of the Indian residential school system. One of them was to repeal section 43 of the Criminal Code of Canada.

"The commission believes that corporal punishment is a relic of a discredited past and has no place in Canadian schools or homes," the TRC wrote in its final report released last week.

A spokesman for Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould confirmed Monday the federal government includes that recommendation in its overall pledge, but said it is too early to get into other details.

"The government is committed to implementing all of the 94 calls to action. However, at this point, we cannot speculate on potential legislative or policy approaches to address this issue," spokesman Christian Girouard wrote in an email Monday.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

PUNISHMENT

The Supreme Court of Canada upheld the "spanking law" in 2004, ruling that physical force could be used by parents and schoolteachers on children between the ages of 2 and 12 years old.

IRAQ DEFENCE MINISTER KEEPS FOCUS ON TRAINING Canadian Minister of National Defence Harjit Sajjan writes in the visitors book before meeting with Iraqi Kurdish leader Massud Barzani on Monday. Sajjan toured the front lines in the war against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, meeting with Kurdish military commanders and Canadian special forces who repelled last week's major offensive west of Irbil. SAFIN HAMED/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

IN BRIEF

Online threats a growing concern for universities

Universities are being urged to put resources into monitoring online threats in light of a spate of incidents at North American institutions that intensified after the fatal mass shooting at an Oregon college in October.

William Taylor, president of the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators, said many institutions south of the border now hire data-mining services to comb the Internet for concerning posts.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canadians injured in Vegas

Two Quebecers remained in a Las Vegas hospital with critical head wounds on Monday after a woman struck them and more than 30 other people with her vehicle on a busy sidewalk along the city's famous casino strip. Sheriff Joe Lombardo said one person died and 35 people were injured after Sunday evening's incident, and he does not believe this was an act of terrorism. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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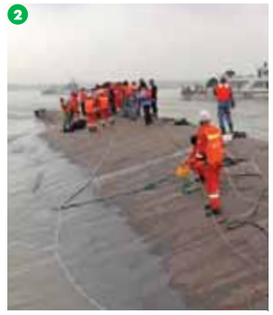
China's year of disasters

SAFETY REGULATIONS

Four incidents spark outrage, demand for more oversight

China's year of man-made disasters began on New Year's Eve when 36 revelers were killed in a stampede in Shanghai. Nearly twelve months later, a mountain of excavated soil and construction waste collapsed into buildings at an industrial park in Shenzhen. Four of the disasters this year that have sparked outrage and prompted the government to pledge to improve industrial oversight and safety regulations:

Chinese Paramilitary police in Shanghai. GETTY IMAGES



Rescuers search for survivors in the Yangtze River. GETTY IMAGES

Fire and smoke rises after explosions in Tianjin. GETTY IMAGES

The aftermath of a landslide in Shenzhen. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

1 Shanghai Stampede:
About 30 minutes before midnight on Dec. 31, 2014, people were jostling to climb a viewing platform next to the Pu river on the scenic Bund promenade when the stampede started. The crush killed 36 people and injured 49, blemishing the image of China's most prosperous and modern metropolis. Investigators found local police were unprepared to handle the size of the crowd, estimated at 300,000 people. The Communist Party boss, district police chief and a third local official in the Huangpu riverfront district were fired and disciplined for corruption.

2 Yangtze Sinking:
The Eastern Star cruise ship capsized in severe winds on the Yangtze River, causing China's worst shipwreck in more than 60 years. More than 440 people died in the June 1 disaster. Captain Zhang Shunwen was arrested after he was rescued from the river, with investigators looking into why he chose to sail into the storm instead of dropping anchor. A government agency in years prior had cited the ship for safety violations, but no one tied to the capsizing has been convicted of wrongdoing..

3 Tianjin Explosions:
A series of explosions at a chemical warehouse on Aug. 12 levelled a swath of the port city of Tianjin, killing 173 and injuring nearly 800. Investigators found that a company, Ruihai Logistics, illegally had stored the combustible chemicals within 1 kilometre of a residential area.
The Communist Party's anti-graft watchdog placed the administrator of China's work safety regulator, Yang Dongliang, who had previously served as Tianjin vice mayor, under investigation while a dozen people including executives at the warehousing company were arrested.

4 Shenzhen Landslide:
A mountain of excavated soil and construction waste toppled after being soaked by heavy rains, hitting buildings in an industrial park in Shenzhen on Dec. 20. At least 85 people are missing, and an official microblog said survival possibilities in the collapsed buildings were small.
Some residents have blamed government negligence for allowing the giant debris pile to build up, while questions have been raised about the weaknesses of the factories and dormitories that crumbled under the landslide.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

HEALTH SCIENCE

Blood policies amended

The three-decade-old U.S. ban on blood donations from gay and bisexual men was formally lifted Monday, but major restrictions will continue to limit who can donate.
The Food and Drug Administration said it is replacing the lifetime ban with a new policy barring donations from men who have had sex with a man in the previous year. While the one-year-ban has been criticized by activists it matches policies in other countries, including Australia, Japan and the U.K.
Gay rights activists said the new policy is a "step in the right direction," but falls short.
"It continues to stigmatize gay and bisexual men," said David Stacy, of the Human Rights Campaign. "It simply cannot be justified in light of current scientific research and updated blood screening technology."
Monday's policy shift was first proposed in late 2014 and follows years of lobbying by medical groups and gay rights groups, who said the previous ban was outdated. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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KENYA

Muslims hid bus passengers from militants

Muslims in a bus in northern Kenya dressed non-Muslim passengers in Islamic garb to prevent extremists from identifying them for slaughter, witnesses said.

Two people died in the attacks in northern Mandera County when gunmen believed to be Somalia's al-Shabab rebels shot at a bus and truck headed for the town of Mandera, North Eastern Regional Co-ordinator Mohamud Saleh said.

Abdrirahman Hussein, a 28-year-old teacher, said some of the Muslim passengers gave non-Muslims head scarves to conceal their identities.

An extremist entered the bus and ordered everyone to get out and form two separate groups of non-Muslims and Muslims, said Hussein. One person, a non-Muslim, decided to run and was shot in the back and died, he said.

A police official said a brave Muslim man fooled the attackers by saying a truck full of police officers that was escorting bus was not far behind.

The officer said the lie about the escort prompted the extremists to order everyone back on the bus and told them to drive off. The extremists ambushed a truck on the same road and asked the driver whether he had seen a truck full of police officers, the officer said. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

3

Number of attacks on security forces carried out by al-Shabab militants last week. Last November, al-Shabab killed 28 non-Muslims on a bus, then the next month killed 36 non-Muslim quarry workers.

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April 2013, Bangladeshi civilian volunteers assist in rescue operations after an eight-storey building collapsed in Savar, on the outskirts of Dhaka. MUNIR UZ ZAMAN/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Collapse was murder: Court

BANGLADESH

Charges laid against 41 in 2013 disaster

A court in Bangladesh's capital accepted murder charges Monday against 41 people including the owner of the Rana Plaza building that collapsed in 2013, killing more than 1,100 people in the country's worst industrial disaster.

Most of the victims were garment factory workers who made clothing for about 29 global brands, including Joe Fresh from Loblaw.

Investigators initially had said the accused would be charged with culpable homicide, but they shifted to the more severe charges after the investigation found that building owner Sohel Rana, his staff and the management of the five garment factories had forced workers to enter the building just before it collapsed even though the workers feared doing so because major cracks had developed in the structure a day earlier.

The maximum penalty for someone convicted of murder is a death sentence, while the maximum punishment for culpable homicide is seven years in jail.

The court of Senior Judicial Magistrate Md Al-Amin decided to go ahead with the trial after accepting the murder charges filed by police in June.

The police report called the deaths a "mass killing." About 2,500 people were injured in the disaster.

Rana and the owners of the five garment factories are among the 41 defendants accused of murder.

While Rana is in jail and 16 others are on bail, the magistrate issued arrest warrants against 24 others, said police prosecution wing officer Mohammad Asaduzzaman.

He said the police would take steps to arrest them. The court told police stations to submit updates on which arrests have been made when the court next hears the case on Jan. 27.

In a separate case, the accused also facing charges of violating safety rules in building Rana Plaza.

The original five-storey building was meant for office space and retail stores, but more floors were added illegally and transformed into factories.

The extremely low wages in Bangladesh led global brands and retailers to choose its garment industry over factories in China and other developing countries.

The building collapse triggered an uproar for reforms in a sector that helps the country earn about $25 billion a year from exports, mainly to the U.S. and Europe. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

1,100 VICTIMS

Most were garment factory workers who made clothing for 29 global brands, including Joe Fresh from Loblaw.

Realtors try virtual reality

REAL ESTATE

Toronto firm turns floor plans into 3D mockups

Overseas investors looking to park their money in Canadian real estate could soon be donning headsets and touring upcoming condo developments in virtual reality, according to the founder of a Toronto-based technology firm.

Invent Dev turns floor plans of new developments into 3D, immersive mockups that can be experienced in virtual reality, such as through the Oculus Rift system, or via the Samsung Gear VR headset.

David Payne, the company's founder and CEO, says he's been getting tremendous interest from the Chinese community.

PROPERTIES
Foreign investors are willing to buy condos without visiting them in person first.

"They are very excited about the potential," he said, noting that in the past week alone he has received three media inquiries from Chinese news outlets.

The technology could help Canadian developers tap into global markets by allowing prospective buyers to tour a space without ever having to board a plane, he said. "They can now, from the comfort of their own home, view any floor plan that they want, with the finishes they want, and feel like they're actually inside that home," says Payne.

The technology can benefit developers in other ways as well, says Payne.

Rather than building model suites, Lifestyle Custom Homes employed Invent Dev's technology to create virtual reality mockups of its upcoming development in Toronto's Leslieville neighbourhood — a significant cost saving for the company, says Payne.

While full-blown virtual reality — the kind that's experienced through a headset — is relatively new in the Canadian real estate industry, a number of agents have been using other technologies to create immersive experiences of homes.

Invent Dev founder David Payne says virtual reality technology could help Canadian developers tap into global markets. CHRISTOPHER KATSAROV/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Cameras such as the Matterport Pro 3D can scan an existing home and create a three-dimensional rendering of it that can be viewed through a simple web browser. A number of Toronto-based brokers with Sotheby's International Realty Canada, which works with a large proportion of overseas buyers, started using the technology earlier this year.

Ara Mamourian says his brokerage, SpringRealty.ca, has been using online virtual tours for all of its listings since 2013. One of the things that prompted Mamourian to start offering the service was a high number of calls from overseas buyers.

"They … can essentially walk through the house and actually feel how big the rooms are, or how small the rooms are, without being fooled by that wide-angle lens," he says.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

FISHING

Thailand denies ignoring shrimp industry slavery

Thailand's government said Monday it is not ignoring the slavery and forced labour in its lucrative shrimp industry that was highlighted in an Associated Press investigation published last week.

At the news conference Monday, government officials did not deny the existence of forced labour but they disputed parts of the story, especially the AP's assertion that police took bribes and turned a blind eye to the practices in the industry.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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B.C. tech startups threaten 'dinosaur' industries

One technology startup is using artificial intelligence to save people who book online flights up to 80 per cent. Another helps farmers boost their crop yields with a mobile app that manages operations from seed to sale. A third aims to replace bank accounts with only a card and an app.

They're all part of a boom in digital-technology startups in Vancouver that are challenging old methods of doing business, and they're out to "disrupt" everything from travel to agriculture to financial services.

"You adapt or you die," said Ray Walia, CEO of Launch Academy, a non-profit firm that trains and mentors such startups. The organization has helped entrepreneurs start more than 350 companies, raising about $57 million in funding and creating over 635 jobs across 15 industries. They include TripDelta, Farm At Hand and Koho.

Walia said employers outside the technology world must change the mindset that "bleeding-edge" advancements don't matter to their industries.

"It's those technology companies that are going to help those incumbents — those dinosaurs — stay alive."

The youth-propelled trend is also flourishing in the technology hubs of Toronto and Montreal.

About 84,000 British Columbians were employed by over 9,000 tech companies in 2014, according to the provincial Technology Ministry — more than in mining, forestry, and oil and gas combined.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Ray Walia THE CANADIAN PRESS

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metro VIEWS

Your essential daily news

Tuesday, December 22, 2015

Witnesses who can pick a recent robbery culprit out of a line-up are usually right, a new study says. But if the test is done months later at trial, false memories may have taken hold.

EMMA TEITEL: ON A BEAUTY QUEEN'S BLESSING IN DISGUISE

Can you honestly say you remember last year's Miss Universe winner — or runner-up? I know I can't, because last year's pageant was a blunder-free affair.

If Aliens crash land on earth tomorrow and demand to know what humans mean when they write #Fail, world leaders should provide them with a tape of Sunday night's Miss Universe pageant.

The now-viral event was more awkward than a thousand puberties because its host, comedian Steve Harvey, accidentally crowned the wrong beauty queen. Harvey misread his most important cue card and declared Ariadna Gutierrez Arevalo, a.k.a. Miss Colombia, winner of the competition, when in fact she was first runner-up. When Gutierrez proceeded to bask in her newfound glory — the sparkly tiara already resting on her head — Harvey interjected to announce his mistake. The rightful recipient of the Miss Universe title was in fact, Pia Alonzo Wurtzbach, a.k.a. Miss Philippines, who, thoroughly confused, walked to centre stage where she was forced to claimed her competitor's crown.

Nobody was a winner on Sunday, not Miss Colombia, who likely lived her worst nightmare, not Wurtzbach who was deprived of her shining moment, and certainly not Harvey, whose initial tweet apologizing for his error was itself rife with errors; he spelled both the Philippines and Colombia incorrectly. (Harvey, the author of a popular dating advice book, Act Like a Lady, Think Like a Man, should consider writing a new tome: "Read Everything Twice." This year's Miss Universe pageant appears to be a lose-lose-lose situation; the sort of colossal public slip-up in which you feel deeply sorry for everyone involved.

But appearances can be deceiving — especially where beauty pageants are concerned. Take a step back from the cruel spectacle of the event, and Harvey's mistake, unfortunate and awkward as it was, may actually be a blessing for the women affected. For starters, we know their names. Can you honestly say that you remember last year's Miss Universe winner — or runner-up? I know I can't because last year's pageant was a blunder-free affair. If the goal of the pageant contestant is to be crowned before an adoring audience and strut across a stage blowing kisses uninterrupted, then Gutierrez Arevalo and Wurtzbach have every reason to curl up in a ball and cry. But if their goal is lasting exposure and relevance on the world stage, they should rejoice.

Temporary tears The accidental crowning of Ariadna Gutierrez Arevalo, above, may have been quickly followed by the sting of disappointment, but both the victorious Miss Universe and the hastily re-christened runner-up should be grateful for the publicity, Emma Teitel writes. GETTY IMAGES

Thanks to Harvey's epic mess-up they will be remembered! This is especially true of Gutierrez Arevalo. Sure she was humiliated and dethroned on live television in front of millions of people, but had there been no mix-up and ensuing chaos she would be a complete unknown today — unable to command international media attention and (what will likely come in the following weeks and months) high profile party appearances, and speaking engagements. You can see it now, in lights: "The Girl Who Was Almost Queen."

This runner-up-as-star principle isn't exactly unprecedented. In 2010 Detroit Tigers pitcher Armando Galarraga came extremely close to pitching a perfect game when umpire Jim Joyce — the Steve Harvey in this scenario — made an incorrect call, ruling one of Galarraga's opponents safe on base when he was, in fact, out. Thanks to Joyce (who, like Harvey, apologized profusely for his bad call), Galarraga didn't get his perfect game. But he did get boatloads of respect and sympathy from media and baseball fans. In fact, the incident, known today as "the Imperfect Game" or the "Galarraga game" is remembered as an example of pitching genius and a spectacle of good sportsmanship (Galarraga was unusually gracious in the face a terrible call).

It's hard to believe that Galarraga's game would stand out so distinctly today had he gotten his wish and pitched a perfect game. In fact, you could argue that more people know who he is precisely because he was the victim of a bad call. The same can be said about Ariadna Gutierrez Arevalo who, thanks to Harvey's colossal mistake and the graciousness with which she gave up her crown, will not slink into obscurity. It's possible she'll be remembered longer than her competitor.

"No one remembers who came in second," said the golfer Walter Hagen. The quote is a favourite among "winners" — among them, surprise, surprise, Donald Trump. But perhaps it's time to amend the expression — or more specifically, to complete it. No one remembers who came in second, unless of course, they got royally screwed out of first.

Emma Teitel is a national columnist for the Toronto Star. She has been a front-of-the-book columnist for Maclean's magazine for the past four years, focusing on a wide range of subjects including women's issues and popular culture. She won the National Magazine Awards gold award for columns in 2013.

metroview

'Real change' under Trudeau doesn't even begin to cover it

Richard Gwyn

For roughly the next fortnight, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau will have nothing more strenuous to do than enjoy himself with his family and utter occasional seasonal pleasantries.

He's more than earned this time off. For six weeks now, Trudeau has been going like a bat out of hell, or, more directly, like a politician convinced he should, and can, transform the country, and even to some extent the world itself.

His pace is unprecedented. The one parallel in our history is the commitment Lester Pearson made to start his tenure with "60 Days of Decision," or doing everything better than had his predecessor, John Diefenbaker.

His program came to an abrupt end when his finance minister, Walter Gordon, brought down a bungled budget he then had to withdraw. Thereafter Pearson moved cautiously, although he went on to introduce universal health care, the Canada Pension Plan, and our flag.

Trudeau has moved far faster. His single most important project would transform the relationship between native people and other Canadians by implementing the 94 recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and granting "nation-to-nation" status, near autonomy, to indigenous organizations, political and cultural.

Others are as ambitious. Canada's first-ever serious commitment to climate change. An increase in taxes to generate more jobs for the middle class, but at the cost of increasing the deficit. A new electoral system.

And on and on. A new relationship between the provinces and the federal government. Withdrawing Canadian troops from the Middle East except as trainers well away from the front lines. Bringing 25,000 refugees from Syria.

Trudeau's phrase "real change" is inadequate. Only in the years after the Second World War, when Canadians first embraced the welfare state, has the country been challenged by so radical a political and cultural program.

Signs of stress have begun to appear. At the climate conference in Paris, Trudeau declared that on this issue Canada would exercise "a new leadership role." He was overdoing it by a wide margin. We're latecomers to the cause. We account for only 1.6 per cent of global emissions.

The sharpest stress comes from the economy. Finance Minister Bill Morneau has signalled the promise to hold the increased debt to $10 billion over two years is out of date.

The sense that "Canada is back" hasn't changed. Trudeau should use the break to keep doing what he's doing, a good deal more slowly. He has a huge majority on his side. But if their jobs vanish or their salaries shrink, the loyalty of many will turn to themselves and their families.

Richard Gwyn is a Toronto Star columnist.

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metro LIFE

Your essential daily news

J.K. Rowling says she 'loves' a black Hermione as Noma Dumezweni cast in Harry Potter play

Homework isn't what it used to be

Heavy backpacks are passé as kids' homework is increasingly completed online. It makes supporting a child's learning at home especially challenging for parents. Here are four teacher-recommended learning apps that will help kids to keep up — or maybe even get ahead. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Grade 8 student Asha Ibrahim, 13, left, reacts to getting a correct answer as she does her homework with Brainrush. Her cousin Hanan Hassan, 13, and also in Grade 8, middle, and sister Amina Ibrahim, 11, Grade 7 encourage her. CHRIS SO/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Brainrush

Best age: All ages
Price: Free
App store rating: n/a (available at brainrush.com)

"Of all the apps I've used with my class, BrainRush is the best," says David Vaillancourt, a middle school teacher in Toronto. This platform allows teachers and students to play, create and share learning games. The use of "adaptive practice" ensures that students are challenged, but not overwhelmed. "Students look forward to using BrainRush, and the games' ability to adapt and respond to the individual student is a unique feature not available with a lot of ed-tech apps," Vaillancourt says. "Parents find it a valuable resource for learning at home and they can easily monitor their children's' progress."

DragonBox Algebra

Best age: Students 5 to 12 (and up)
Price: $4.99
App store rating: 4"½ stars out of 5

Brian Aspinall, a Grade 7 and 8 teacher in Chatham, Ont., recommends DragonBox Algebra as an engaging, problem-based method of helping students learn basic concepts such as variables and balancing equations. "I've been using this app for years and students really enjoy learning with it," he says.

Google slides

Best age: 7 years old
Price: Free
App store rating: 4"½ out of 5

Traditional homework is often solitary and boring, but Google Slides changes all that. Students use the app to write journals, create digital books, solve math problems and create presentations. Their work can be easily shared with peers and teachers for immediate feedback. It's like a dynamic, interactive 21st-century diary.

Tools 4 Students

Best age: Students 5 to 14
Price: $1.19
App store rating: Not yet rated

Jonathan So, a Grade 6 teacher, finds Tools 4 Students invaluable. The iPad app provides 25 different organizer templates to help students organize their thinking, take better notes, or prepare their thoughts before writing. So recommends Tools 4 Students for essays and research activities.

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THIS WEEK: What Are Dental Implants?

Rewire kids' brains to regulate behaviour

Dr. Vanessa Lapointe says that as a psychologist, about 90 per cent of the parents she sees come in because of behavioral challenges in their children. CONTRIBUTED

PARENTING

Discipline by fear is a short term solution, expert says

Picture your kid misbehaving. Maybe they're jumping on the sofa, or having a meltdown, or throwing toys at their siblings. As a parent — what do you do? Send them to their room, make them skip dinner… or offer them a reward if they cut it out, perhaps?

You might want to rethink your methods, according to a new book from Vancouver-based psychologist Dr. Vanessa Lapointe. In Discipline Without Damage: How to Get Your Kids to Behave Without Messing Them Up (out in January), the mother of two puts parenting strategies in perspective — and debunks some popular ways to discipline your kids.

Lapointe talks about why certain forms of discipline can impact kids' development, and what parents should do instead.

In the book, you talk about common ways parents handle those moments of acting out — things like time-outs, grounding kids, and offering rewards. What's wrong with those long-engrained approaches?

First of all, we have to land at why those approaches have become so popular. It's because they afford instant gratification. When you give a child a time out, you're going to have an immediate reaction — the child stopping their behaviour. Yes, you've got the behaviour to stop, but you've managed to stop it at a cost — it's out of fear. It's like going to the carnival and you play the whack-a-mole game; you've whacked it down, but it's going to pop up in another way, like another behaviour or frustration, because the child continues to have this unmet need for the parent to come alongside them. Frustration often morphs into aggression, either outwardly or inwardly directed, which could mean self-loathing or self-harm.

So what's the better way to discipline kids, then?

The thing is, children are going to be children, based on how their brains are growing. Behaviours we look at as challenging are just a natural part of being a child. We need to come alongside and connect with them. The key to discipline without damage is to be disciplining through a relational connection with your child that meets them in their natural state.

You give one example of a mom calming down her daughter Sophia by taking her aside and explaining a situation to her calmly. It seems great, but how do parents achieve that in moments of stress and frustration?

Parents need to be in a regulated state to come alongside their children and be the regulator in that relationship. When you're looking in on a child who's engaged in some kind of challenging behaviour, you might see that behaviour as that of a child who needs to be schooled and put into place. Instead of seeing your child as a brat, see them as someone who is having a hard time while their brain is really fired up. When you see them through those kinds of eyes, it invites a whole new kind of emotion. If you lived in my house, I'm not a rock star, and I'm not doing this perfectly all the time. There are days when I'm a hot mess! But no-one says you need to be perfect — you just need to do this enough times so your child's neural circuitry holds onto enough over time. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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HEALTH

Minute may go a long way

Six one-minute bursts of high-intensity training might be just as good as your traditional workout, according to a new study out of Australia. ISTOCK

A U.K. study which involved Curtin University, Australia has suggested that the increasingly popular high-intensity training has the same cardiovascular and metabolic benefits as traditional moderate-intensity training.

Researchers looked at 87 healthy but inactive participants between the ages of 18 and 60, and randomly divided them into high intensity or traditional exercise programs, each lasting for a duration of 10 weeks.

Participants in the high-intensity group followed one of two training regimes, three times a week. The first regime was an 18-minute workout which involved 15-second high-intensity cycling sprints with 45 seconds active recovery, the second was a 25-minute workout which involved 60-second cycling sprints and 60 seconds of active recovery.

The traditional workout group did moderate-intensity cycling for 30 minutes five times a week, progressing to 45 minutes five times a week by week 10. Both groups used personal monitors to check they stayed at the required age-specific heart rate throughout the workout.

The study's results showed that the high-intensity group demonstrated health improvements that were similar to those of the traditional moderate exercise group.

Both groups also showed a comparable reduction in non-soluble fats in the blood stream, which are associated with cardiovascular disease. AFP

‘Fat but fit’ is not healthy: Study

RESEARCH

Heavy people with high activity levels still at risk

A new Swedish study has dismissed the idea that ‘fat but fit’ is OK, finding instead that obese men with a high aerobic fitness level were still at a higher risk of early death than those of a normal weight but with a lower fitness level.

Aerobic fitness level and obesity have been well studied in older participants, but less so in older adolescents. Wanting to look at a link between aerobic fitness in late adolescence and risk of early death, the team of researchers from Umeå University, Sweden followed 1,317,713 men with a mean age of 18 between 1969 and 1996.

The team also looked to see if risk of early death was linked to the level of aerobic fitness in those that are obese, as well as those of normal weight.

The team of researchers assessed participants’ aerobic fitness by asking them to cycle until they had to stop due to fatigue, and assessed causes of death using national registers.

During a mean followup period of 29 years, the results showed that increased aerobic fitness was linked to a decreased risk of early death, with men in the highest fifth of aerobic fitness showing a 48 per cent lower risk of early death from any cause compared with those in the lowest fifth of aerobic fitness.

However, although aerobic fitness was also associated with a reduced risk of death from any cause in both normal-weight and overweight individuals, these benefits were reduced in obese individuals.

In addition, men with a normal weight had a lower risk of death than obese participants even if their fitness levels were lower, showing a 30 per cent lower risk of early death.

There were also no significant health benefits at all in those participants who were in the extreme obese category.

The study was published in the International Journal of Epidemiology.

For an average of 12 years the team looked at 334,161 European men and women measuring height, weight and waist circumference. Participants were also asked to report levels of physical activity. The results, published in The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, found that as body mass index (BMI) increased, the benefits of the walking decreased. AFP

FITNESS

Lower weight

Men with a normal weight had a lower risk of death than obese participants even if their fitness levels were lower, showing a 30 per cent lower risk of early death.

ROSE REISMAN THE SAVVY EATER

THIS WEEK: Shrimp appetizers

Shrimp appetizers are a popular choice for holiday parties, but staying away from the deep-fried variety will keep it healthier.

PICK THIS

PC Jumbo Cooked Shrimp

Portion 8 shrimp
Calories 90
Fat 0.5 g
Protein 20 g

SKIP THIS

PC Butterflied Shrimp

Portion 6 shrimp
Calories 300
Fat 16 g
Protein 6 g

HERE’S WHY

Equivalent in fat to an 8 oz sirloin steak.

Those innocent-looking small appetizers that we pop in our mouth are hiding excess fat, calories and sodium — and of course, no one eats just one! For a healthier holiday app, cooked jumbo shrimp are a great choice. They are a good source of lean protein with virtually no fat. Dip them in a zesty cocktail sauce or toss into a salad or pasta. Avoid the breaded and deep-fried shrimp, which have a load of unnecessary calories and fat, and much less protein. Too many of those and you’ll for sure have to hit the gym in the New Year.

Lots (and lots and lots) of offers on phones and plans!

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Brockville
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Cornwall
Cornwall Square

Kingston
Cataraqui Town Centre

JOHANNA SCHNELLER WHAT I'M WATCHING

Live-action brings energy

THE SHOW: Undateable, season three, episode eight (City/NBC)
THE MOMENT: The Fourth Wall

Undateable now films every episode live and tweeting is encouraged. CONTRIBUTED

Permanently single dude Danny (Chris D'Elia) just met Charlotte (Whitney Cummings) at his local watering hole, but already they feel a connection.

"I bet your sex life is like Nic Cage's movie career," she taunts him.

"You'll do anything."

She stretches out her legs. He cracks wise about her having balls. She says one of them has to. "Careful," he says, holding back real laughter. "Don't get us cancelled" — here he looks straight into the camera — "twice."

The studio audience cackles on cue.

This series joins a growing wave of live TV, as networks scramble to give people a reason to watch shows as they air.

The Sound of Music Live! and The Wiz Live! scored big in their broadcasts. Grease Live is set to air January 31.

Tyler Perry recently announced he'll host a live musical about Jesus, The Passion, this coming Palm Sunday.

Undateable floundered in its first two seasons, but a live broadcast last May perked up ratings. Now every episode airs live, complete with musical guests who perform during breaks, live Tweeting encouraged (the actors' Twitter handles appear on screen) and much smashing of the fourth wall that usually divides the cast and audience.

In-jokes are big (Cummings and D'Elia costarred in her show, Whitney), as are stunt casting, winking at the audience, exaggerating any mishaps or missed lines, and hamming it up for the cheap seats.

The cast sure seems to have a good time.

But they should redirect some of that energy into the scripts.

Johanna Schneller is a media connoisseur who zeroes in on pop-culture moments. She appears Monday through Thursday.

FILMMAKERS

Japanese festival offers big money

A Japanese festival focused on the art of the short film is offering a new award of nearly a million dollars to a director from anywhere in the world with a great pitch for a movie.

Organizers say short video is where audiences are going, as entertainment increasingly gets consumed on smartphones. They also believe the format holds potential for novice filmmakers, bringing fresh insight.

The deadline for submitting a 500-word pitch on what's billed as a "thrilling, exciting, moving" storyline is Feb. 29. The pitch must be written in either Japanese or English.

"Movies aren't about length," said Tetsuya Bessho, an actor who founded the festival in 1999, likening the best short films to the minimalist but fine-tuned concentration of haiku poetry.

"There are Hollywood flops with everything thrown in for marketing. You can't decide if it's a comedy, a love story or an action film. People are getting bored with that kind of movie," said Beshho, whose films include Godzilla vs. Mothra and Solar Crisis, with Charlton Heston.

500,000¥

Five finalists will be chosen. Each gets a 500,000 yen ($4,000) prize. Then one will receive 100 million yen ($800,000) to make their movie. That winner will get an additional 1 million yen ($8,000) award.

His festival has showcased the best in short films, such as Toyland, which won an Oscar, and the light-hearted comedy I Hate Musicals.

It also honours less conventional work from a new breed of creators, including Indonesian auteur Yosep Anggi Noen, who was also featured at the Rotterdam and Busan international film festivals.

"It can be more free, more independent," Anggi said of the short film format. "Nobody tells me how to make that film."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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MISS UNIVERSE MIXUP

Nation stands by runner-up beauty

Former Miss Universe Paulina Vega removes the crown from this year's Miss Colombia, Ariadna Gutierrez, in order to give it to Miss Philippines, Pia Alonzo Wurtzbach. GETTY IMAGES

The beauty pageant-obsessed South American nation briefly celebrated what appeared to be an unprecedented feat: back-to-back Miss Universe titles.

From President Juan Manuel Santos to Miss Colombia's relatives in the Caribbean port city of Barranquilla, Colombians shouted in joy when it was announced that Ariadna Gutierrez Arevalo had won this year's crown.

But the celebrating turned to shouts of anger seconds later as host Steve Harvey announced on live television from Las Vegas that he had mistakenly read from the cue card. The contestant from the Philippines was the new Miss Universe, not Miss Colombia.

"The entire country, and our family, was overcome with emotion," Alvaro Arevalo, the Colombian runner-up's cousin, told Blu Radio in an interview Monday. "The truth is we're a little shocked."

The sudden reversal even caught by the president by surprise, forcing him to reverse his initial celebratory Tweet.

"For us you'll always be our Miss Universe," he wrote in a message to Gutierrez after the error was discovered. "We feel very proud."

Colombians are obsessed with beauty and pageants are a major draw across social classes. But unlike neighbouring Venezuela, which has won seven Miss Universe titles, Colombians are accustomed to falling short of the crown, with four runner-up appearances since 1992.

Before last year's crowning of Paulina Vega, only one other Colombian had won the Miss Universe title, in 1958.

In the aftermath of Sunday's shocking finale, Colombians were at a loss to explain the mistake.

Some morning talk show hosts blamed Donald Trump, saying they could find no financial record confirming that he had indeed sold the rights to the pageant as he said he did in September.

Many Colombians were earlier outraged when Trump on the campaign trail accused Mexico of sending rapists and drug traffickers to the U.S. On Sunday, some said they believed the Republican presidential candidate was somehow still pulling the strings to prevent another Latina from being crowned.

Trump said Monday that he regretted the mix-up, adding that it would never have happened under his watch.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Let is snow, let it snow, let it shine

Weather can act as a muse or metaphor in song. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

CAROLS

Study looks at lyrical tributes to weather in popular song

Holiday songs mention the heat nearly as often as they do the snow, according to a recent study by British meteorologists who combed through pop music lyrics looking for references to the weather.

"Perhaps surprisingly, in Christmas songs in our primary list the word 'cold' is used less than one might expect, but instead is implied through idealistic Christmas images of snow," the authors say.

Take Let It Snow, for example: "Oh the weather outside is frightful/But the fire is so delightful."

Many holiday songs feature some version of this contrast because they are written for an audience in the northern hemisphere, the researchers say.

The only exception they found was the upbeat Christmas countryfolk single Summer by Australia's Sunny Cowgirls, which describes barbecues, jet-skiing and "runnin' round with the sprinklers on."

Sally Brown and her co-authors from the universities of Oxford, Newcastle and Reading didn't only study Christmas-themed music; they found 759 weather songs in a karaoke database, from Good Day Sunshine to Blowin' in the Wind. (The majority of the weather songs, in fact, were by The Beatles or Bob Dylan.)

The researchers' aim was to investigate "how society portrays weather in music and the types of weather that inspire musicians." But they also just wanted to have a little fun, the lead author Sally Brown, a research fellow at the University of Southampton, told the Toronto Star.

It all started on a lark, she said. At a conference in 2012, the meteorologists played an icebreaker game where they listed off weather-related tunes: You Are the Sunshine of My Life, Walking on Sunshine, It's Raining Men — the list went on.

They had so much fun doing it that they continued in their spare time, between studying coastal geomorphology and experimental atmospheric physics, Brown said.

Out of the 190 songs that had weather as a primary theme, sun and sunshine were the most common references, followed by rain.

The researchers say they may explore the subject further by studying music in other languages or focusing on certain genres.

Whether they do or not, their experiment has already changed the way some of the authors listen to music.

"Last week, I was working away in a hotel and they had Christmas music and I was counting the weather references," Brown said.

"It was Frosty the Snowman." TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

STUDY FINDINGS

Weather holds the key

Very often, the weather is used as a metaphor for love or a relationship, lead author Sally Brown, a research fellow at the University of Southampton noted.

Bus Stop by The Hollies, for example: "All that summer/We enjoyed it/Wind and rain and shine/That umbrella, we employed it/By August, she was mine."

For some songwriters, the weather seems to have acted as their muse.

George Harrison apparently wrote Here Comes the Sun after leaving a business meeting in April 1969, on the first sunny day of the year after a particularly dreary winter, according to the study. Meteorological records show that that April was the sunniest month on record until 1984. When Harrison sang "It's been a long cold lonely winter," he may have been speaking literally.

They also found a correlation between certain weather references and the keys that a song is in. Mentioning the sun "significantly increases the probability" that a song is in a major key, while songs in minor or mixed keys are more likely to mention the rain. If a song in their database mentioned a rainbow, it was 100 per cent likely to be in a major key. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

(cue angels singing)
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The Boston Red Sox will retire Baseball Hall of Famer Wade Boggs' No. 26 during a ceremony at Fenway Park on May 26

Herdman urges players to learn from the pain

WOMEN'S SOCCER

Coach tells his team World Cup heartbreak a growth lesson

John Herdman doesn't want his players to forget their World Cup pain.

The Canadian women's national team was left bitterly disappointed this summer after crashing out of a tournament the hosts felt was there for the taking, losing 2-1 to England in a heartbreaking quarter-final.

Six months later and with preparations well underway for 2016 Olympic qualifying, Canada's head coach hasn't sensed a World Cup hangover, but rather a renewed belief.

"I don't think you move past something like that," said Herdman. "You have to move through those things. You have to reframe. You have to look at the things that worked well for us that we were really happy about. And you have to look at other aspects where we need to grow."

With that in mind, Canada just wrapped up a four-team event over the weekend in Brazil that saw the squad finish second after losing the final 3-1 to the hosts.

Herdman brought a mixture of youth and experience to South America following a training camp in Vancouver, with teenagers Kennedy Faulknor (16), Deanne Rose (16), Gabrielle Carle (17) and Marie Levasseur (18) all making their full international debuts.

John Herdman high-fives fans prior to the start of the FIFA Women's World Cup quarter-final match between England and Canada in June. RICH KAM/GETTY IMAGES

"What stood out was the performances of the team in some of the games where you really did get to see the quality that we could have moving forward," Herdman said in a telephone interview from Brazil. "The senior players have cultivated a culture where these kids can come in and really play in all phases."

Speed and scoring were among the areas where Canada was lacking at the World Cup. Herdman is hopeful that some of the new blood will help.

> **You have to move through those things. You have to reframe.**
> John Herdman

"I think the team is comfortable that we've got strategy and structure down," he said. "It's now bringing that alive — that winning mindset and just leaving everything out on the pitch every time."

Canadian captain Christine Sinclair was among the veterans who made the trip to Brazil and said it was encouraging to see some of the younger players fulfil roles with another camp set for next month ahead of CONCACAF Olympic qualifying in February.

"Qualifying is always a stressful time, not going to lie," she said. "It always comes down to one game. You win, you're in. You lose, you're out. Football's a funny game sometimes. I've been on both sides of those games. You can't take any of these teams lightly." THE CANADIAN PRESS

FIFA

Blatter banned: 'I will fight until the end'

Banished from soccer's ruling body for eight years for unethical conduct, Sepp Blatter won't give up the presidency of his beloved FIFA without a fight.

"I will fight. I will fight until the end," Blatter said Monday at a news conference that started 90 minutes after he and former protege, vice-president Michel Platini, were each banned by FIFA's ethics committee.

ELECTION

In two months 209 FIFA members will elect a new leader.

It was a stunning removal of world soccer's most powerful leaders over a $2-million payment by FIFA to Platini, the president of European soccer's ruling body UEFA. The payment is also the subject of a criminal investigation in Switzerland.

"I'm sad. It can't go on this way. It's not possible," said the 79-year-old Blatter, who has spent more than half his life working for soccer's scandal-hit governing body.

"After 40 years, it can't happen this way. I'm fighting to restore my rights."

Already serving a provisional ban, the elected FIFA president and Platini, his longtime likely successor were kicked out of the sport just two months before 209 member federations elect a new leader.

Their offences were judged to be conflict of interest and disloyalty to FIFA. They avoided life bans because corruption was not proven.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sepp Blatter
PATRICK B. KRAEMER/KEYSTONE VIA THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

IN BRIEF

Thorpe staying with Als after resignation nixed

Noel Thorpe will stay on as defensive co-ordinator and assistant head coach of the Montreal Alouettes.

The CFL club confirmed Monday that Thorpe will be back for the 2016 campaign.

Reports last week said Thorpe, who had two years left on his contract, had resigned and was looking to sign with the Edmonton Eskimos.

That prompted league commissioner Jeffrey Orridge to ban coaches moving from one team another without his written approval. The Alouettes gave Thorpe the choice to remain in his job or not coach anywhere in the CFL, but insisted he would be welcome to stay.
THE CANADIAN PRESS

Varlamov's sparkling net work earns first star

Colorado Avalanche goaltender Semyon Varlamov, Washington Capitals right-wing T.J. Oshie and Minnesota Wild centre Mikko Koivu have been named the NHL three stars of the week.

Varlamov was named first star after posting a 3-0-0 record with a 0.67 goals-against average, .981 save percentage and one shutout to help the Avalanche extend their winning streak to five games.

His week was highlighted by a 3-0 win over Chicago on Tuesday in which he stopped all 29 shots he faced, including 20 over the final two periods. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Bruins Talbot suspended two games for hit to head

The NHL has suspended Boston Bruins forward Maxime Talbot two games without pay for his check to the head of New Jersey's Jiri Tlusty.

The check occurred at 14:30 of the second period of Boston's 2-1 win over the Devils on Sunday. After Tlusty cycled the puck into the Bruins corner, Talbot delivered a late hit that made contact with the Devils forward's head.

No penalty was called on the play, and Tlusty remained in the game.
THE CANADIAN PRESS

NBA

Basketball under the Christmas tree

On Friday, after gifts are given and dinner is digested, somebody might watch an NBA game for the first time this season.

Christmas, with five nationally televised games, is when the NBA pops onto the radar for some sports fans.

If that's the case, they missed Stephen Curry and the Golden State Warriors put together the best start in league history, winning their first 24 games. They are 26-1 and appear even more potent than the team that beat Cleveland in June to win the championship.

"I said going into the year I think they're the prohibitive favourite, and I think that if you gave me the choice of picking either Golden State to win it or getting the rest of the field, I would take Golden State," said TV analyst Jeff Van Gundy. "I think they're that big a favourite."

Plenty more has happened. Kobe Bryant said this season would be his last, and Karl-Anthony Towns and Kristaps Porzingis have been terrific in their first.

The Eastern Conference has gotten better, except for the Philadelphia 76ers, who have managed to look even worse.

Stephen Curry and LeBron James will meet for the first time since the NBA Finals on Christmas Day. GETTY IMAGES

SCHEDULE

Christmas Day

Pelicans at Heat, 12 p.m.*
Bulls at Thunder, 2:30 p.m.*
Cavs at Warriors, 5 p.m.*
Spurs at Rockets, 8 p.m.**
Clippers at Lakers, 10:30 p.m.**
(* = Sportsnet, ** = TSN)
All times eastern

The dominant story, and dominant team, has been Golden State. San Antonio isn't far behind, while Cleveland tops the East despite a bevy of injuries.

And though it feels like the season is just starting to some, the reality is all the winning the Warriors have done before could pay off much later.

"When you get out with the cushion like Golden State has, you can go through a bad stretch where maybe you take an injury to a really valuable piece and you're able to withstand it," Van Gundy said. "I thought home court had a big impact on last year's finals and I think it can have an impact again." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

FOOTBALL IN BRIEF

Mariota off the table for home finale with MCL sprain

Tennessee Titans quarterback Marcus Mariota has a sprained MCL in his right knee that will keep the rookie out of Sunday's home finale with Houston.

Interim coach Mike Mularkey said Monday that Mariota will be re-evaluated after that game and wants to play the season finale at Indianapolis on Jan. 3.

Mariota was hurt when sacked for the third time at 10:32 of the second quarter in a 33-16 loss at New England. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

More bad news for Cardinals' 'Honey Badger'

For the second time in his three-year NFL career, Tyrann Mathieu is out for the season with a torn ACL.

Arizona Cardinals coach Bruce Arians revealed the extent of the injury Monday.

The safety/cornerback — "Honey Badger" to his fans — injured his right knee after intercepting a pass in the final minutes of Sunday's 40-17 win at Philadelphia.

He tore the ACL and LCL in his left knee 13 games into his rookie season in 2013. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Giants receiver Odell Beckham Jr. stepped outside the rules on multiple occasions during his clash with Josh Norman and the Carolina Panthers on Sunday. JULIE JACOBSON/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Out-of-control Odell given one-game ban

NFL

Giants receiver to miss crucial clash Sunday in Minnesota

Losing control during Sunday's loss to the Panthers will cost Giants star receiver Odell Beckham Jr. one game.

The NFL on Monday suspended Beckham for next weekend's visit to Minnesota for his conduct against Carolina, when he drew three personal foul penalties. The league cited "multiple violations of safety-related playing rules."

Beckham appealed the decision. His case will be heard by either James Thrash or Derrick Brooks, the hearing officers jointly appointed by the NFL and the players' union.

Without Beckham, the Giants (6-8) would be missing their best offensive weapon as they try to stay alive in the NFC East race.

Beckham and Panthers cornerback Josh Norman tangled from the beginning of the Panthers' 38-35 victory. At one point, Beckham delivered a diving helmet-to-helmet hit on Norman while blocking.

There was plenty of pushing, shoving, swinging, wrestling, late hits and trash talking between them.

Beckham, the 2014 Offensive Rookie of the Year, has 91 catches for 1,396 yards and 13 touchdowns, tied for the league lead. He has a base salary of $893,000 and would lose $55,813 for being suspended for Sunday night's game at the Vikings.

> **He was 15 yards down the field and went straight for my head. It was just crazy, man.**
> Josh Norman who took a helmet-to-helmet hit from receiver Odell Beckham Jr. on Sunday.

The suspension was imposed by NFL vice-president of football operations Merton Hanks, who ruled that Beckham's actions placed his opponents at unnecessary risk of injury.

"At numerous times during (Sunday's) game against the Carolina Panthers, your actions placed a fellow player at unnecessary risk and clearly did not represent the high standards of sportsmanship expected," Hanks said in a letter to Beckham.

Hanks specifically pointed to the late helmet-to-helmet hit against a defenceless Norman in which Beckham left his feet prior to contact to spring forward and upward into his opponent's head. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

IN DENVER

Broncos banking on Osweiler

Brock Osweiler remains the Denver Broncos' starting quarterback pending medical tests on his injured left shoulder, and Peyton Manning will try to return to practice Wednesday.

Coach Gary Kubiak said "nothing has changed" with his QB situation Monday, a day after Denver blew a double-digit halftime lead for the second consecutive week.

Kubiak said Osweiler was "sore today ... and all indications are that he'll be OK."

Osweiler was injured when he scrambled for seven yards in the second quarter of Denver's 34-27 loss at Pittsburgh, where the Broncos (10-4) blew a 17-point lead.

Manning has missed five weeks with a torn left plantar fascia.

Kubiak will meet with both QBs and "have a plan in place" Wednesday.

The Broncos also announced Monday that safety David Bruton Jr. played most of Sunday's game with a fractured right fibula. He will be sidelined for four to six weeks. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Peyton Manning will try to practise on Wednesday. GETTY IMAGES

RECIPE Tuscan Chicken Skillet Dinner

PHOTO: MAYA VISNYEI

Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada

With meat, veggies and legumes in a single recipe, you don't need anything else for dinner. And you won't miss the mess of more than one pan to clean!

Ready in
Prep time: 30 minutes
Serves 4

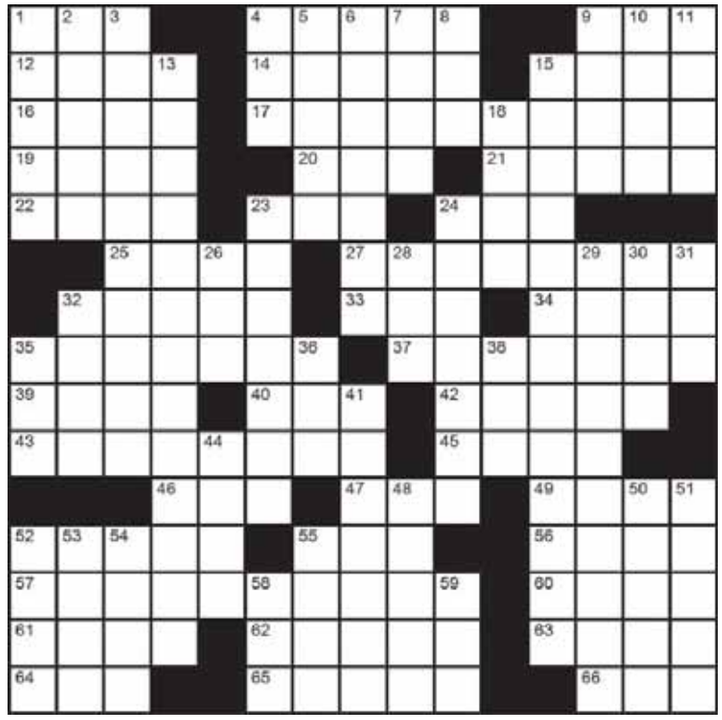
Ingredients
- 2 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 lb chicken breasts, cut into bite-sized pieces
- 1/4 tsp oregano
- 1/4 tsp thyme
- 1 1/2 cups mushrooms, sliced
- 1 onion, diced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/4 cup sun dried tomatoes
- 14 oz can cannellini beans, drained
- 19 oz can tomatoes
- 1/4 tsp chili powder
- 1 tsp sugar

Directions
1. Pour the oil into a large skillet and warm to medium heat. Brown the chicken. You may have to work in batches. Remove from the pan and set aside. Drain all but about 1 or 2 Tbsp of fat.
2. Add the mushrooms, oregano and thyme to the pan and allow the mushrooms to become quite soft and brown. Remove them from the pan and set aside.
3. Add the onion and garlic and cook for about 3 minutes until they're soft and fragrant. Add the sugar, sun dried tomatoes, canned tomatoes and beans. Simmer for about 5 minutes, breaking up the tomatoes with the back of a spoon.
4. Gently tip in the chicken and mushrooms and simmer for another 10 minutes, until the meat is cooked through.

FOR MORE MEAL IDEAS, VISIT SWEETPOTATOCHRONICLES.COM

CROSSWORD Canada Across and Down

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



ACROSS
1. Puny planes posting
4. Bing Crosby's Christmas medley duettist David
9. Li'l hairstyles
12. Cartography subj.
14. 'Pine' is a popular one at Christmas
15. Hourly pay
16. Tech sch. grad
17. Sporty character voiced by Canadian actor Paul Kligman in "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer": 2 wds.
19. Roughly
20. Realty database, commonly
21. Beginning
22. Genuine
23. Comprehend
24. Towels holder
25. Houston ML-Ber, to fans
27. "Up on the _ _": Christmas tune that goes "Down through the chimney with lots of toys..."
32. Burglar
33. Lieutenant Tasha _ ("Star Trek: The Next Generation" role)
34. Ploy
35. "Gimme Little Sign": 1967 hit for _ Wood
37. Ritzy spice
39. Tennis great Bjorn
40. Egg mass
42. Clods
43. Treats left for Santa
45. Lounge around
46. Ctrl, Shift, _
47. Long river in Scotland
49. Jeans tops
52. "Let _ Be Peace on Earth"
55. _ Mahal
56. Stagnate
57. "We Three Kings of Orient Are"... "Field and fountain, moor and mountain / Following _ _."
60. Change position
61. Seal herds
62. Buy
63. By any chance
64. Photo _ (PR events)
65. Groups, briefly
66. Cousin of -ette

DOWN
1. Spew
2. Opera voice
3. People like Yukon Cornelius when traveling: 2 wds.
4. Grad letters
5. "_ _, All Ye Faithful"
6. Rich
7. Bus. name abbreviations
8. Ordinal suffix
9. Beaver creations
10. S-shaped moulding
11. Cobblestone
13. Holiday things sent/received: 2 wds.
15. "It's the Most _ _ of the Year": Classic tune on #48-Down
18. Dove murmurs
23. "Don't hold back!": 3 wds.
24. In a country style
26. Soak flax
28. '_' _ in Ornament
29. Bird in "The Twelve Days of Christmas": 2 wds.
30. Bears, in Barcelona
31. Write
32. Deanna _ (Counselor on "Star Trek: The Next Generation")
35. 'Start With Trust' is this org.'s slogan
36. "_ so fast!"
38. _ Fighters (Rock band)
41. Mansion settings
44. Peter Fonda title role
48. Current festive album produced by Bob Rock: '_ _ Arden Christmas'
50. North Pole toyshop workers
51. Soothsayers
52. 'Winter' as Wnter
53. Basketball net
54. Halts
55. Tea stirrers [abbr.]
58. Cape Town's home [acronym]
59. Li'l streets

IT'S ALL IN THE STARS by Sally Brompton

Aries March 21 - April 20
You are on your way up in the world. The Sun's move into the career area of your chart means if you have a plan and if you make the effort there is nothing you cannot accomplish.

Taurus April 21 - May 21
The Sun's change of signs endows you with almost limitless confidence. But try not to take life too seriously. Make a point of seeing the funny side of everything that happens.

Gemini May 22 - June 21
The week will bring to light something you have been trying to hide from yourself. If you want to get over it now is the time to face up to your demons. They are not as terrifying as you imagine.

Cancer June 22 - July 23
Get over any embarrassment you might feel at revealing your innermost feelings. Even if you are the kind of Cancerian who keeps your emotions in check you will want to share what is in your heart.

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
Anything you begin will have the stamp of success on it, so long as you start slowly and don't take silly risks. You have big ambitions but you still need to take care of your health.

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
The Sun moves into the most dynamic area of your chart today, making this one of the best times of the year for getting things done. Have a plan and pace yourself.

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
As from today you will feel a lot more positive about what kind of person you are and what kind of things you should be doing in your life. If you feel yourself pulled in a new direction don't let others talk you out of it.

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
You'll let others know what you think and feel today. However, that does not mean you should tell them everything about yourself. It could give rivals information to use against you.

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
The efforts and sacrifices you've made recently have not been in vain, and your financial situation will improve by the end of the week. Don't rely on promises — get cash in hand.

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
If you focus your energy in a single direction you'll achieve something amazing. There can be no more doubts or wondering if you are making the right moves. Choose a path.

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
You're about to get yet another opportunity to overcome a fear and you must take it. Stop worrying about life and start living it and enjoying it. There are so many good things in the world.

Pisces Feb. 20 - March 20
Someone you meet on your travels will become a good friend and also a partner who can assist with the big projects you've got lined up. Your needs and theirs are closely related.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

Every row, column and box contains 1-9

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YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

Your daily crossword and Sudoku answers.

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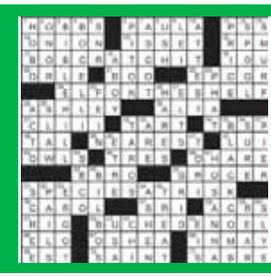

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